

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STATE OF NEBRASKA SICA EVALUATION RFP 195-Z1

TOPICS

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SCOPE OF WORK AND EVALUATION DESIGN

1. The RFA mentions in several places that you are looking for an evaluation that will be adaptable to the rest of your prevention system. Will the scope of the work extend beyond the SICA and, if so, what else will be involved?

The scope of RFP 195Z1 is solely for evaluation services for Nebraska's State Incentive Cooperative Agreement (SICA). As reflected by the Nebraska SICA mission, goals and objectives, however, Nebraska's SICA is being leveraged and utilized to achieve substantive advances in prevention system development across organizations at the local, regional and state levels in order to achieve and sustain significant substance abuse prevention outcomes. Multidisciplinary prevention system development is viewed as a direct and integral component of the SICA implementation process.

2. Might this contract be used to redesign the entire prevention system's data collection mechanisms?

As reflected in Nebraska SICA mission, goals and objectives (RFA page 21, Section IV, Subsection A.2.c) a key SICA objective is the creation and utilization of common data collection and assessment systems across organizational boundaries. The SICA evaluation should utilize a participatory approach that includes analysis of outcomes for each objective, including data collection and analysis mechanisms.

3. Do you already have an evaluation contractor that has been working with you since the beginning of the SICA?

The contract for the baseline evaluation has been completed. This RFP is for subsequent SICA implementation and outcome evaluation services.

4. Is there a current evaluation design that we will need to follow?

No, there is not a current evaluation protocol in place that must be followed.

5. On page 31, #4.a., does this section refer to the Nebraska system specifically or to other State Incentive Grants, as well?

In the section on Technical Approach, respondents should demonstrate an understanding of project requirements and supportive research both of the national SICA project as implemented by CSAP, as well as of the specific evaluation needs of the Nebraska SICA initiative.

EVALUATION COSTS AND BILLINGS

6. Is the budget for the evaluation limited by the 15% cap on administration and evaluation which is part of the CSAP requirement, or would other funds be used to supplement additional work?

Funding for the State level evaluation will come from funds under the CSAP-mandated 15% cap on administrative and evaluation services. SICA subrecipient coalitions were required to reserve at least 10% of their total budget for evaluation services, with 5% of the total award reserved by the State for subrecipient-level evaluation and related technical assistance from the Evaluator selected by the State.

7. Would the State consider a Cost Plus Fixed Fee or Time & Materials contract instead of Firm Fixed Price?

No

8. Article FF Payment states that payment to the contractor will not occur until work completion and final acceptance by the State. Will the State consider partial payments with a percentage withholding instead of requiring the contractor to finance the entire project? If you are going to require the contractor to finance the work, is interest expense an allowable cost?

The contractor may bill for services as they are rendered and/or completed, on a monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly or end-of-service basis.

DATA COLLECTION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

9. What baseline data and/or evaluation reports exist from the beginning of the SICA for the Nebraska substance abuse prevention system and the local coalitions?

In addition to State data included in the baseline evaluation, other State level baseline data and reports includes a range of social indicator (e.g. crime, socio-economic indicators), archival data (e.g. vital statistics, assessments, progress reports, minutes) and survey data (e.g. 2003 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey, 2001 and 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Youth Tobacco Survey, National Household Survey). Other state prevention system data include a baseline needs assessment. In addition, SICA subrecipient coalitions were required to use statistically valid methods to collect and assess baseline local substance abuse rates, as well as risk and protective factor profiles. SICA subrecipient coalitions were also required to conduct baseline prevention system assessments—a process in the State prevention system is currently engaging. More information on the subrecipient needs assessment process can be found in Nebraska SICA Guidance Documents, including the "Nebraska SICA Request for Applications," the "Evidence-Based Substance Abuse Prevention Planning Toolkit," and the "SICA Guidance Document for Selecting Science-Based and Promising Substance Abuse Prevention Strategies," all of which can be accessed at www.nebraskaprevention.gov.

10. What are the other existing data sets that might be used in the SICA evaluation?

State and local level data sets include social indicator, archival and other survey data, including the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the Youth Tobacco Survey, Treatment Needs Assessment data, the National Household Survey, vital statistics data, highway safety data, crime statistics, socio-economic indicators, prevention system assessments at the state and subrecipient levels, etc.

11. Will access to and transfer of quantitative and qualitative data sets be facilitative?

The State seeks a participatory evaluation process that includes ongoing and meaningful access to—and transfer of—data between evaluators, State Work Groups and staff, and subrecipient coalitions.

12. Conducting a needs assessment is included in the RFA in various places. Is this something for which the contractor would have to collect and analyze data? That task might add significantly to the budget.

The State has existing contracts and services for data collection and assessment, including a state-level analysis and report for the results of the 2003 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey. In addition, Nebraska Partners in Prevention and its Work Groups are conducting a cumulative and multidisciplinary needs assessment as part of the development of Governor's Vision 2010; Nebraska's Strategic Plan for Substance Abuse Prevention. The state level needs assessment, as well as needs assessments conducted by subrecipients, should be an integral component of the evaluation of the Nebraska SICA and its mission to support the development of effective and sustainable prevention systems at the local, substate and state levels that engage in data-

driven, evidence-based planning processes that result in substantive and sustainable substance abuse prevention outcomes.

13. Are there any current efforts to collect outcome GPRA data, and if so what phase of data collection are they in and would the new evaluator have access to that data?

All SICA subrecipient coalitions are required to participate in all state and national evaluation efforts, as well as to include the applicable CSAP core measures in their local evaluation plans. The State Evaluator will be responsible for reviewing subrecipient evaluation plans and providing technical assistance to subrecipients and their local evaluators to help ensure that the appropriate CSAPcore measures—and other applicable measures—are included.

NEBRASKA RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTOR STUDENT SURVEY

14. How frequently is the Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey (NRPFS) conducted?

The Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey will be conducted every other year during the fall semester.

15. Can the data from the survey be linked to school buildings, particular programs or to specific participants of those programs?

Local assessment of risk and protective factors by a statistically valid method was required of all SICA applicants, and many of them chose to collect this information through participation in the NRPFS. NRPFS results were aggregated (per local decision) in a variety of ways, including building level, district level, multiple buildings and/or districts, county level or multi-county level. Local data is locally-owned, and accessible only through the participating school district(s). The state has access to NRPFS data only at the regional and state levels.

16. Is survey participation mandated or voluntary?

Survey participation is voluntary, however all SICA subrecipients are required to continue to collect and analyze risk and protect factor information in a statistically valid manner that is consistent with the collection and analysis of their baseline risk and protective factor data.

17. Does Nebraska require active or passive parental consent?

The NRPFS utilizes passive consent.

NEBRASKA SICA SUBRECIPIENT COALITIONS

18. Do the funded coalitions cover the entire state, or will they in the future?

There are currently fourteen funded subrecipients that are geographically dispersed throughout the state. An additional ten applicants have an opportunity to address substantive weaknesses in their original applications and resubmit them by August 31, 2004.

19. Have the funded subrecipient coalitions already started program implementation?

Subrecipients will begin implementation in the summer of 2004

20. When will the additional sub-recipients be selected for the remaining \$300,000 and is there an anticipated number of additional coalitions that will be selected?

An additional ten applicants have an opportunity to address substantive weaknesses in their original applications and resubmit them by August 31, 2004.

21. What percentage of your SICA funded coalitions will be implementing environmental strategies for prevention?

The majority, if not all, of SICA subrecipient coalitions will be implementing environmental as well as individual substance abuse prevention strategies (i.e. policies, practices and programs)

22. Are the funded subrecipient coalitions aware of the level of participation that would be required of them to make an evaluation work?

Extensive training and technical assistance on all aspects of prevention system and community substance abuse prevention assessment and planning--including monitoring and evaluation--were provided across the state and the SICA Guidance Documents and supportive materials reflect the State's emphasis on the importance of initial and ongoing evaluation. The 5% reservation of subrecipient funds for assistance from the State Evaluator is an additional mechanism to support local evaluation efforts. The State cannot, however, make statements regarding the particular levels of awareness of any single subrecipient, and directs those interested in that issue to review the guidance regarding evaluation expectations that was provided in the SICA Toolkit, RFA and Guidance Document to potential SICA applicants.

23. Are there designated evaluators at the sub-recipient level?

SICA subrecipient coalitions are responsible for implementing their local evaluation plans, and for designating responsibilities for evaluation activities.

24. Are sub-recipients responsible for collecting all of the community level outcome data for evidence-based programming?

SICA subrecipient coalitions are required to evaluate local strategy-level outcome measures for process and outcome evaluation. They are also required to monitor and evaluate both prevention system and community substance abuse prevention outcomes for continuous improvement, and to determine whether project objectives and outcomes are being achieved. In addition, SICA subrecipient coalitions are required to 1) collect and track short-term, intermediate and long-term outcome indicator data (e.g. risk and protective factors, social indicator, archival data), 2) include the appropriate CSAP core measures, and 3) describe how continuous improvement will be achieved. The State Evaluator will be expected to provide technical assistance to SICA subrecipient coalitions to help ensure that their evaluation plans are adequate for State and local evaluation requirements, and to ensure that the appropriate CSAP core measures are included.

EVALUATION STAFFING

25. How should we figure “staff months” for our current projects?

The term “staff months” refers to the measure of the amount of staff time allocated to a project. An example for calculating staff months follows:

A project lasting 12 months and utilizing the services of two full time equivalent (FTE) staff and four .5 FTE staff would have a measure of 48 “staff months.” The calculation would be as follows: two FTE x 12 months (or 24 staff months) plus four .5FTE x 12 staff months (or 24 staff months) = a total of 48 FTE staff months.

26. Is office space provided by the State for the on-site Evaluation Manager who would be working on-site in Lincoln?

The State is able to provide office space and furniture, and access to basic office equipment (computer, printer, copier, fax) at the State office.

27. On page 31, section 3. i. 1. b. 4, you mention that the resumes should include an “understanding of the process.” Could you clarify that?

Resumes should include information that documents that key proposed personnel have knowledge and experience that clearly demonstrates an understanding of the

process of evaluation, particularly with regard to the requirements of SICA evaluation.

28. There are references to using evaluation data in (a) planning and (b) monitoring prevention programming. Are these two tasks something for which the contractor would have to budget staff time?

As a participatory evaluation process, the State would expect the Evaluator to budget staff time to provide feedback, information and reports as requested to NePiP and its Work Groups, SICA staff and stakeholders, and subrecipient coalitions, in order to support ongoing and meaningful monitoring and continuous improvement.

OTHER

29. Would it be possible for us to get a list of the training topics that have already taken place for the Nebraska SICA to date? This would help us determine the needs for additional evaluation training.

A list of community training dates and topics is available at the SICA website at: <http://www.nebraskaprevention.gov/TOT.htm>

Video trainings on NRPFS implementation and analysis are available at <http://www.nebraskaprevention.gov/videotrainings.htm>

30. Does the State of Nebraska have an Institutional Review Board that would be involved in approving our procedures to protect human subjects?

No.

31. Is there a page limitation for proposals?

No

32. In the RFP, it is noted that "the original Nebraska SICA application" is available on your website. Does this refer to Nebraska's SICA application to CSAP? If so, please provide additional instructions on getting to that document.

Nebraska's original SICA application narrative can be accessed in the table of items at <http://www.nebraskaprevention.gov/sicaevalrfp.htm>. Please note, however, that the Nebraska SICA mission, goals and objectives, as well as funding award criteria were subsequently refined and revised during implementation. Interested RFP applicants should review the SICA RFA and other Guidance Documents, as well as the current mission, goals and objectives summary, for most current information. All of these can be accessed from the

table of items located at the website listed above.

33. On page 32, section 4. b. # 2 of the second set of numbered items, when you talk about “progress” are you referring to increases and decreases in statewide use, improvements in the statewide prevention system, or do you use some other definition?

The use of the term “progress” in this instance refers to decreases in substance abuse.